

INTEGRATING CHRISTIAN VALUES INTO NURSING ETHICS

MENGINTEGRASIKAN NILAI-NILAI KEKRISTENAN DALAM ETIKA KEPERAWATAN

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Abstract

This article aims to examine in depth how Christian values can be integrated into nursing ethics in professional practice. In the world of nursing that continues to develop and faces various moral dilemmas, the role of spiritual and religious values is becoming increasingly important, especially values derived from Christian teachings. Values such as love, humility, justice, respect for human dignity, and selfless service are integral parts of Christianity that are in line with ethical principles in nursing. With a qualitative approach through a literature review from various reliable sources, this article identifies a strong relationship between the moral principles of Christianity and the principles of professional nursing ethics. The results of the study indicate that nurses who internalize and apply Christian values in their practice will have higher ethical sensitivity, deep moral reflection skills, and more compassionate and holistic services. These findings underline the importance of faith-based continuing education and development for nursing staff, so that they can provide health services that are not only professional, but also spiritually meaningful.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing ethics serve as a fundamental foundation for professional nursing practice. It provides guidance in moral decision making, shapes professional attitudes, and upholds the quality and integrity of healthcare services (Kozier et al. 2015). In the nursing profession, ethics is not merely a set of normative rules but represents the very soul of the service offered to patients. Nursing ethics assists nurses in navigating the complexities of clinical situations that require wise choices among competing interests (Monroe, 2019; Paal et al., 2015; Poorchangizi et al., 2019). Amidst technological advancements and administrative pressures, nurses are still required to uphold the moral principles that prioritize patient safety and dignity. In today's dynamic and complex healthcare settings, nurses frequently face moral dilemmas that demand deep ethical reflection (Kangasniemi et al., 2015; Katelin Hoskins et al., 2018; McCarthy & Gastmans, 2015). Challenges such as limited resource allocation, end-of-life decisions, and interprofessional communication require a strong ethical foundation. In such circumstances, spiritual values taught in Christianity can serve as meaningful sources of moral guidance and strength.

Christian values, such as love (agape), compassion, sacrifice, and selfless services, are highly relevant to nursing practice. These values promote a life attitude that prioritizes the interests of others, willingness to be present for those who suffer, and sincere care for fellow human beings. The Bible emphasizes the importance of loving one's neighbor as a reflection of love for God (Matthew 22:37–39), which in the nursing context means loving patients genuinely and without self-interest. In the life of Jesus, we see an example of a compassionate service to the sick and suffering carried out without discrimination or expectation of return. This model has become a central inspiration for Christian nursing practice (Gijsberts, 2015; Rego & Nunes, 2019; Sulmasy, 2018),

since Jesus not only healed physically but also restored emotions and spiritually. Love rooted in faith not only strengthens the spirit of service but also provides deeper meaning for nurses in their vocation. By making love the basis of action, Christian nurses can build more meaningful therapeutic relationships with their patients. For this reason, Christian values prove to be not only spiritually relevant, but also practically and ethically applicable in the nursing profession (Bridge, 2017).

Integrating Christian values into nursing ethics does not imply replacing established professional standards. Rather, it aimed to enrich nursing approaches by adding deeper spiritual dimensions. Christian values can serve as intrinsic motivators that strengthen nurses' commitment to professional codes and standards. Ethical principles in nursing, including autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence, are highly aligned with Christian teachings that emphasize love, justice, and self-giving (Callahan, 2012; Liefbroer et al., 2017; Neathery et al., 2020). With the understanding that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God (*Imago Dei*), Christian nurses view patients not merely as subjects of care, but as individuals with intrinsic worth and irreplaceable dignity (Blankinship et al., 2021; Harris & Tao, 2022; Mondt, 2017). This approach nurtures a humanistic and holistic nursing paradigm that emphasizes respect for each patient's uniqueness. In ethical decision making, the belief in *Imago Dei* encourages nurses to consider patients' spiritual and existential values alongside clinical considerations. It also deepens empathy and affirms nurses' commitment to treat every patient with dignity, regardless of their social, economic, or religious backgrounds.

In addition to reinforcing the spiritual dimension of care, Christian values influence the development of nurses' character and moral integrity. In a healthcare environment that is often marked by stress and emotional fatigue, a solid character becomes the foundation for professional resilience. Faith-based nursing education plays a significant role in shaping nurses with heightened moral sensitivity, genuine empathy, and capacity for ethical reflection in complex situations (Taylor et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2017; Yong, 2017). With the character formed by Christian values, nurses are able to deliver care that is sincere, patient-centered, and compassion-driven, even under pressure or uncertainty. Values such as humility and forgiveness help nurses build healthy, collaborative workplace relationships. Spiritually formed characters shape nurses not only into competent professionals, but also into authentic individuals guided by compassion. Moral conviction supported by the Christian faith helps nurses remain steadfast in the face of dilemmas that challenge their personal values. Therefore, faith-based character education is a vital component for developing nurses who are both professionally competent and ethically grounded.

In practice, Christian nurses encounter challenges when integrating faith-based values into pluralistic work environments. Today's healthcare services reflect religious, cultural, and personal diversity, requiring high levels of sensitivity in attitudes and behaviors. Wisdom and tactful communication are essential for Christian values to be applied without offending others' beliefs (Kilner 2015). M. Yoder et al., 2022; Yong, 2022). Christian nurses must understand that faith must respect the diversity of others to avoid conflict or resistance in the workplace. In this context, universal Christian values such as love, justice, and respect for human dignity can be inclusively applied across belief systems. Christian nurses are challenged to bridge their personal convictions with the demands of professionalism in multicultural care settings. Reflective and collaborative approaches are important to ensure that faith and professional practices coexist in harmony. With adaptive abilities and contextually informed discretion, nurses can become agents of change, who promote tolerance, inclusiveness, and peace in diverse clinical settings.

The integration of Christian values also helps nurses comprehend suffering, death, and hope at a deeper level within the human experience. From a Christian spiritual perspective, suffering is not merely a physical or psychological burden, but carries a redemptive, educational, and hopeful meaning tied to eternal life. When caring for patients undergoing existential crises, Christian nurses can offer spiritual and emotional support that extends beyond clinical interventions. Research indicates that spiritual approaches in nursing care can improve patient satisfaction and quality of life, particularly in palliative settings (Meilaender & Werpehowski, 2005; M. Yoder, 2024). Nurses with a

faith-based perspective can face death with courage and empathy, and accompany patients and their families through difficult transitions. Belief in eternal life and hope in Christ empowers nurses to face end-of-life care with dignity and compassion. This creates a caregiving experience that is not only loving but also brings transcendent meaning to patient suffering. Therefore, spiritual integration is not merely an added value, but an essential component in building a nursing practice that is both holistic and deeply humane.

In conclusion, the integration of Christian values into nursing ethics represents a crucial element for developing a complete nursing practice that encompasses the professional, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This integration promotes a care paradigm that not only focuses on clinical outcomes but also on relational quality and humane service. This article aimed to explore the relevance and contributions of Christian values in shaping the ethical and professional attitudes of contemporary nurses. The author acknowledges that spiritual approaches have not yet been systematically incorporated into modern nursing education and practices. Therefore, this article also serves as an effort to promote faith integration into a professional realm that has long been dominated by rational and technical perspectives. It is hoped that this work will serve as both an academic and a practical contribution to advancing a more meaningful and holistic nursing paradigm. When understood and applied appropriately, Christian values can offer viable responses to many moral challenges in the nursing profession. This study underscores the importance of faith-based nursing education, which is adaptive to the evolving demands of modern healthcare and human needs.

Through a comprehensive literature review, this article highlights how values such as love, humility, sacrifice, and respect for human dignity are not only religious in nature, but also constitute universal ethical principles that are highly applicable in nursing care. These values transcend religious boundaries and can be widely accepted as foundational to building sincere therapeutic relationships rooted in humanity. This approach positions Christian nurses as healing agents who not only address physical needs, but also respond to the emotional and spiritual dimensions of patients. Nurses are required not only to master clinical skills, but also to possess moral and spiritual discernment in facing the complex realities of patient care. Understanding the integration of faith and ethics enables nurses to cultivate deeply rooted, meaningful practices. This study also opens space for dialogue between academic nursing and transcendent values, which are often overlooked in modern healthcare. Therefore, the author emphasizes the need for structured spiritual and ethical training within nursing education institutions. This article ultimately serves as both an academic and moral invitation to re-examine the ethical foundations of nursing care grounded in love and affirmation of universal human dignity.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research to analyze and explore in depth how Christian values can be integrated into nursing ethics. This approach was selected because it allows the researcher to understand the concepts both theoretically and contextually, based on credible and relevant written sources. The main focus of this study was to identify the relationship between ethical principles in nursing and Christian values that are both spiritual and moral. The initial stage of the research began with data collection from various sources, including accredited scientific journals, nursing textbooks, theological writing, and institutional documents published within the last ten years. The researcher prioritized the literature from both primary and secondary sources that had undergone peer review to ensure the quality of the analysis. To select the sources, a purposive sampling technique was used, meaning that the data sources were intentionally chosen based on thematic relevance, content validity, and academic credibility. The selection process focused on scholarly works that specifically discussed issues related to nursing ethics, Christian spirituality in healthcare, and the application of moral principles in clinical nursing practice. The goal of this phase was to ensure that the study was grounded in strong scientific evidence, while also reflecting an interdisciplinary understanding of nursing and Christian ethics.

Once data were collected, the researcher conducted a systematic analysis using a thematic approach. The analysis process involved coding techniques, which entailed identifying key sections in the literature that addressed major issues, and categorizing, which involved grouping data into specific themes. Using this method, the researcher successfully identified patterns of thought and consistent narratives regarding the integration of Christian values into nursing practice. The major themes that emerged included love as the foundation of care, respect for human dignity, humility in professional conduct, and influence of spiritual values on nurses' moral reflection. This process was conducted repeatedly and in depth to ensure that the interpretations were not speculative or biased. The validity of the findings was strengthened through data triangulation, which involves comparing information from various sources to ensure coherence and consistency. In addition, the researcher consulted experts in nursing and Christian ethics to gain broader insights and avoid overgeneralization. These expert discussions helped reinforce the theoretical framework and interpretation of the findings, making the research more scientifically accountable.

To ensure that the findings of this study could be meaningfully applied in real-life practice, the researcher also implemented a validation phase using both peer review and member checking. The peer review process involved several academics and practitioners with backgrounds in nursing and Christian ethics. These individuals provided critical feedback on the content of the study, logic and flow of the argumentation, and alignment between theoretical analysis and actual clinical realities. Additionally, the researcher employed member checking by soliciting inputs from experienced Christian nurses currently engaged in clinical practice. This step aimed to determine whether the research findings reflected the real-world experiences of practitioners and whether the insights offered were practically useful. Feedback obtained from both groups was used to revise and refine the content of the article. Finally, the research findings were organized into a scholarly article that presented the main results in a systematic manner, accompanied by theoretical and reflective discussions, as well as practical recommendations for implementing Christian values in contemporary nursing ethics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings from this literature review indicate that the integration of Christian values into nursing ethics has a significant impact on the development of nurses' characteristics and the quality of care that they provide. This spiritually rooted approach not only shapes personal attitudes, but also guides professional behavior in performing nursing responsibilities (Dehghani et al., 2015; Varkey, 2021). Numerous studies and scholarly sources have emphasized that nurses who embody Christian faith tend to demonstrate deeper empathy, consistent concern, and moral steadfastness in making complex ethical decisions. Such attitudes arise from the conviction that caring for patients is a part of a divine calling to serve others. Amid professional challenges, faith becomes a moral compass that empowers nurses to act according to their conscience and universal values of goodness. Consequently, nursing practice is not solely driven by medical protocols, but is also grounded in a high degree of spiritual awareness. Faith integration in nursing ethics creates a space for meaningful reflection when facing ethical dilemmas. Christian values provide a solid foundation for cultivating ethical sensitivity among nurses in everyday practice.

A concrete example is found in the study by (Johnstone, 2022; Nadeem, 2022; Yeo et al., 2020), which demonstrates that a person's level of religiosity plays a crucial role in enhancing a nurse's readiness to provide spiritual care to patients. This study underscores that religious beliefs influence not only personal life, but also directly affect the quality of care delivered to patients. Religious nurses are generally more attuned to the spiritual needs of their patients, especially in critical or end-of-life situations. These findings are further supported by research from (Shelly et al., 2021), which asserts that evangelical values such as love, compassion, and sacrificial service form a strong foundation for Christian nursing practice. In this context, love is not merely an emotional feeling but is expressed through concrete actions that positively affect patient well-being. Care

delivered with sincerity and compassion creates a sense of safety and respect for patients who are in vulnerable conditions. Spiritually sensitive care, supported by deep empathy, has also been shown to strengthen therapeutic relationships between nurses and patients. For these reasons, faith-based values play an important role in enhancing the quality of professional interactions in healthcare settings.

Beyond love and compassion, the Christian value of sacrifice also has a tangible impact on how nurses perform their duties. Nurses who internalize Christ's teaching of sacrificial services are more likely to go beyond their formal job descriptions to ensure the comfort and well-being of their patients (Alici & Kaya, 2022; Nicotera & Mahon, 2013; Phiri et al., 2023). This is evident in many cases where nurses patiently and lovingly care for terminally ill patients, despite experiencing high levels of stress and resource limitations. Such actions reflect dedication and commitment that stem not only from professional responsibility, but also from profound spiritual conviction. This approach reinforces the concept of holistic nursing that addresses the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of patients in an integrated manner. Holistic care positions the patient as a whole with needs that extend beyond medical treatment alone. Sincere, selfless care fosters an atmosphere of dignity and warmth within the clinical relationship. Therefore, the spirit of sacrifice is a defining feature of ethical nursing practice grounded in Christian values.

In the field of nursing education, many Christian-based institutions have taken concrete steps to integrate faith into the learning curriculum. These curricula are designed not only to enhance students' clinical skills but also to cultivate spiritual character and ethical depth. Nursing students are encouraged to view their profession as a life calling to serve others with love and integrity. The development of spirituality and Christian values is embedded into professional training to equip future nurses to navigate the complexities of clinical environments holistically. Sources such as (Emerson, 2017; Tekeste & Nimo, 2022) note that this approach has had a positive effect on graduates' preparedness in facing moral and ethical challenges in the workplace. Students are trained not only in scientific critical thinking but also guided toward deep moral and spiritual reflection in every nursing intervention. As a result, faith-based nursing education produces graduates who are not only technically proficient but also individuals of integrity, empathy, and moral wisdom. These findings affirm that an educational model that balances academic rigor with spiritual formation is essential in preparing competent and holistic healthcare professionals.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that in workplace environments that support ethical values, Christian principles contribute meaningfully to cultivating a culture of mutual respect. Work cultures shaped by values such as love, humility, and respect for human dignity strengthen interprofessional relationships within healthcare teams. Strong relationships among nurses, physicians, and other healthcare providers are essential in delivering effective and humane care. Christian values practiced by nurses can serve as a model for fostering harmonious and supportive working environments. Such environments benefit not only the team but also improve patient experience and satisfaction. Interprofessional collaboration built on empathy and trust leads to more responsive and integrated care delivery. The presence of Christian nurses who consistently live out their faith-based values enriches team dynamics and encourages overall improvement in service quality. Therefore, integrating faith-based values into professional work life clearly contributes positively to both workplace culture and nursing care outcomes.

Considering these findings, it can be concluded that embracing Christian values makes a significant contribution to the overall quality of nursing ethics. These values not only strengthen nurses' personal character but also influence how they interact with patients and colleagues. When nurses ground their service in faith, every action they take is guided by moral awareness and sincere love. The impact of such an approach extends beyond the individual to shape broader systems of care that are more meaningful and humane. Therefore, the integration of Christian values into nursing education and practice should be recognized as a vital component in the development of the nursing profession as a whole. The literature reviewed in this study provides a strong foundation for advocating a transformation of nursing ethics that is more holistic and spiritually grounded. Moreover,

this study opens pathways for further empirical research to examine the real-world impact of faith integration in clinical nursing practice. Consequently, these results offer a clear direction for advancing a model of nursing that is not only professional but also deeply human and spiritually transcendent.

Discussion

The discussion on the integration of Christian values into nursing ethics highlights several critical aspects that significantly contribute to the development of nursing practices that are not only ethically sound but also spiritually meaningful. In this context, Christian values are not viewed merely as supplementary components but rather as foundational elements that deepen the meaning of professionalism in caring for others. One of the core values that emerges from the findings is love, which holds a central position in Christian nursing practice. Love is not only the basis of the relationship between nurse and patient, but it also serves as the primary motivation in making ethically charged decisions. This value encourages nurses to see patients as fellow human beings who are to be loved sincerely, regardless of their background, social status, or beliefs. In various medical dilemmas, Christian nurses are expected to act out of love so that the decisions made remain oriented toward the holistic well-being of the patient. By placing love at the heart of care, nurses build relationships that are more personal, empathetic, and rooted in moral commitment. This value also serves as a response to the challenges of modern medical practice, which often tends toward mechanization and neglects the human aspect of healthcare delivery.

In the context of nursing ethics, the value of love is closely related to the principles of beneficence, which means doing good, and non-maleficence, which means not causing harm. These principles guide nurses in ensuring that the care they provide always results in the greatest benefit while minimizing potential harm to the patient. Christian nurses are challenged to consistently choose actions that bring about the greatest good, even when those actions require personal sacrifice in terms of time, energy, or emotional strength. Love in this context should not be understood merely as an emotional feeling but must be realized through concrete acts of patience, attentiveness, and commitment to the patient's well-being. Such expressions of love strengthen the nurse-patient relationship because they are grounded in profound moral and spiritual responsibility. Furthermore, care that is rooted in love also enhances the patient's trust in the nurse, which positively affects the healing process as a whole. The role of love becomes especially vital in critical situations where technical medical judgments must be complemented by moral and empathetic discernment. For these reasons, the value of love must be instilled and nurtured throughout every stage of Christian nursing education and practice.

In addition to love, the concept of *Imago Dei*, which affirms that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God, also plays a central role in shaping the Christian nurse's perspective on patients. This understanding fosters respect for human dignity that is not diminished by physical condition, age, social status, or cognitive ability. Patients are no longer seen merely as recipients of medical services but as whole persons endowed with divine worth and irreplaceable dignity. This worldview strengthens the principle of respect for patient autonomy, which involves recognizing the right and freedom of individuals to make informed decisions about their own care. In practice, this requires nurses to engage in honest, transparent, and empathetic communication so that patients feel respected and are actively involved in the decision-making process. When *Imago Dei* becomes an ethical foundation, nurses do not treat patients as objects but rather as equals who deserve full attention and care. This attitude also protects patients from discriminatory treatment and supports the realization of inclusive and humanistic nursing care. For these reasons, the concept of *Imago Dei* holds high relevance in shaping an ethical approach that prioritizes respect for human dignity.

Another essential Christian value that directly relates to nursing practice is humility. In a medical environment often marked by pressure and high expectations, humility becomes a key attitude that allows nurses to remain open to input, criticism, and the lived experiences of patients.

This disposition helps nurses avoid the assumption that they always know best and fosters awareness that patients possess valuable perspectives and life stories that deserve acknowledgment. Humility enables nurses to build relationships with patients that are collaborative rather than hierarchical. Consequently, the therapeutic relationship becomes stronger, as it is based on mutual respect and trust. This attitude also enhances nurses' ability to provide deeper spiritual support, as they become more attuned to the emotional and spiritual needs of their patients. Within interprofessional teams, humility contributes to a healthy work environment because it fosters cooperation, a willingness to learn from colleagues, and shared responsibility. Therefore, humility should be regarded as a strength, not a weakness, in building professionalism and moral integrity among nurses.

Amid the cultural and religious diversity present in healthcare settings, Christian nurses also face challenges in expressing faith-based values explicitly. The pluralistic nature of modern nursing practice demands that all healthcare professionals adopt an inclusive, open, and culturally sensitive approach. In this situation, universal values such as love, justice, and empathy can serve as bridges for applying Christian principles without being exclusive or imposing personal beliefs. Nurses are expected to embody these values through actions that are practical and respectful, enabling them to be accepted by people from diverse backgrounds without creating resistance. Communication must take into account patients' cultural contexts and spiritual beliefs in order to avoid conflict or misunderstanding. In this regard, wisdom in communication and situational awareness become critical competencies for Christian nurses. With careful and sensitive approaches, Christian values can be meaningfully implemented in nursing practice without violating professional norms or tolerance standards. Furthermore, such efforts open up opportunities for interfaith dialogue and collaboration, enriching the caregiving experience and broadening the moral horizon of the nursing profession. For this reason, the ability to apply faith-based values contextually serves as an indicator of both spiritual maturity and professional competence.

Nursing education rooted in Christian values plays a highly strategic role in developing nurses who are not only clinically competent but also spiritually and ethically mature. Curricula that integrate character development, moral reflection, and theological learning provide a solid foundation for students to understand nursing as a vocational calling (Behr, 2023; Vander Lugt, 2016). This form of education not only imparts technical skills but also shapes worldview and moral sensitivity in addressing the complex realities of clinical practice. Students are guided to internalize values such as love, sacrifice, and respect for human dignity as fundamental principles in every aspect of nursing care. (Dehghani et al., 2015; Paterson et al., 2021; Rego & Nunes, 2019; Varkey, 2021) emphasizes that this approach contributes to nurturing responsibility, integrity, and devotion in patient care. With a holistic educational background, Christian nurses can serve as role models who unite professional expertise with a spiritual dimension that touches the hearts of patients. This character formation also encourages the emergence of nurses who possess the moral strength to uphold principles even under ethical pressure and clinical dilemmas. Therefore, Christian nursing education must continue to be developed as a foundation that fosters both professional excellence and spiritual depth.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions presented, it can be concluded that integrating Christian values into nursing ethics constitutes an approach that not only enriches the dimension of professionalism in nursing practice but also offers the spiritual and moral depth essential for addressing the complexities of modern healthcare. In this context, Christian values such as love, sacrifice, humility, justice, and respect for human dignity are closely aligned with the universal principles of nursing ethics. Principles including beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice do not contradict religious values; instead, they complement and reinforce them. Therefore, this integration serves as a bridge between professional practice and spiritual awareness in healthcare delivery. This study makes a meaningful contribution by answering the central research question concerning how Christian values can be practically integrated into nursing ethics. One

application is found in the internalization of agape love, which inspires nurses to serve patients sincerely and selflessly. Furthermore, the recognition of Imago Dei affirms that every patient possesses divine dignity that must be fully honored. These values not only enrich nursing theory but also shape the personal character of nurses within real-life clinical interactions.

In addition to love and respect for human dignity, humility plays a vital role in shaping the caregiving character of Christian nurses. Humility encourages nurses to be open, patient, and attentive to the needs of patients, while also being willing to listen empathetically to their spiritual concerns. This value serves as a foundation for building genuine and egalitarian therapeutic relationships. Likewise, the value of justice compels nurses to deliver care fairly, without discrimination, and to advocate for the rights of vulnerable and marginalized patients. In this regard, justice is not only legal but also moral, manifesting God's love through social justice in healthcare settings. The integration of these values is not only relevant in the practice of individual nurses but also applicable within educational frameworks and healthcare systems more broadly. Nursing curricula that are faith-based and accompanied by ongoing spiritual formation will produce graduates who are not only clinically skilled but also morally grounded. As a result, nurses will be well-equipped to navigate both the technical challenges of healthcare and the ethical decisions that profoundly impact human life.

Ultimately, the integration of Christian values into nursing ethics is not only feasible but also profoundly necessary for shaping a nursing model that is holistic, professional, and spiritually meaningful. This model emphasizes a form of care that touches not only the physical body of the patient but also the soul and spirit in profound ways. Such an approach positions nurses as true healing agents who operate not only according to medical protocols but are also motivated by love, faith, and sincere compassion. Therefore, support from various stakeholders, including educational institutions, hospitals, professional organizations, and faith communities, is essential in creating a care ecosystem that is consistently rooted in Christian values. This collective awareness will strengthen a culture of care that is humane, grounded in love, and responsive to the needs of our time. Amid challenges such as dehumanization resulting from technological advancement and systemic pressures in healthcare, spiritual values remain a foundational safeguard for preserving the meaning of humanity in every nursing action. For this reason, the integration of Christian ethics is not merely an option but a noble mission and calling for every Christian nurse. It represents a concrete expression of devotion to God through compassionate service to fellow human beings.

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